

Oikos AUSTRALIA

Making disciples who make disciples....

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Bringing down
CASTLES!

Oikos

Australia

Multiplying missional communities by
making disciples who make disciples

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Suggestions and news are welcome. Please
send them in by January 30th.

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OIKOS Australia is a friendship ministry to
home churches, simple churches and similar
missional gatherings that are happening across
our nation and around the world today.



Directions >>

FOR SOME TIME NOW GOD HAS IMPRESSED ME WITH TWO CORE PRIORITIES. They are summarized in scripture in Jesus' words to "Love the Lord your God with all our heart and soul and mind and love your neighbour as yourself." (Matt 22:37)

LOVING GOD

This is a familiar passage of scripture but its meaning is significant to me. It means that my first priority everyday is to spend time in the presence of God and to seek to listen to Him. When I fail to do this I begin to operate more in the natural or what the Bible calls the "flesh"

For me, seeking God usually involves a time of reading some scripture or sometimes a Christian book and then journaling and asking God what he is saying to me... I try to listen, not just talk! Sometimes Christian praise and worship music helps to open my heart. I find that when I do that, he often impresses me with thoughts and words or Biblical passages or sometimes a picture in my mind. Some of those images have been very powerful and still guide my life. Sometimes he just gives me a feeling of peace or assurance that I am his son and he is well please with me. It really touches my heart when this happens.

At other times He prompts me to repent in some area of life such as an attitude or words that I have spoken, or ways that I have related to Kate or my children or to others.

Instead of going about my daily life and work making all the choices myself I am trying increasingly to ask the question: "Father, what you are saying in this situation?" It's being open to being led by the Spirit or living in the Spirit. When I am making choices or decisions, I'm trying to live in this reality. This isn't just a theory but gets very practical on a daily and sometimes hourly basis.

I often don't get it right, but I'm amazed at how gracious and patient God is with me, even when I fail he gently reminds me again - such as the need to spend more time with him daily.

I feel that this focus also applies to every Christ follower. We all each need to hear his voice regularly if we are to walk and live as vibrant alive Christians, instead of just being religious people. There is a large difference between following the spirituality of Jesus and having a "religious spirit" and an attitude that can be so insensitive and even offensive to others, especially to non-believers. It can even be difficult for believers to cope with when they feel judged or condemned!

LOVING PEOPLE

The second priority that God has been giving me is to love other people. It sounds like a motherhood statement, but relates to practical everyday opportunities and challenges. For me it often means the challenge to put *people* rather than *tasks* first. Giving time to people is one of the key ways to show love. We discussed at a recent gathering of missional groups/simple churches, what it means to love people and what makes them feel loved?

People answered the question in various ways, but one of the key responses was to give people time and to uncritically accept them, along with practical help in the course of life.

Recently I have seen my wife Kate patiently taking time to down tools and listen and share with people, even when she is very busy (Continued on page 7)



GOODBYE BESSIE. WE LOVE YOU. Just as the magazine was going to press we received the sad news that Bessie Pereira (the founder of Oikos Australia) has passed away, Sunday December 8th, after a long period of illness. She passed away peacefully surrounded by her family with full confidence in her faith in Christ and strong in her desire to be with Him. We will carry her story in the next edition of the magazine.

DIFFERENT GLASSES

and the *CRINGE* factor

PHIL BROWN

Sometimes my younger children play by putting on crazy clothes and masks and glasses. It can not only make a person look different – it can also color their world differently. The lenses of a pair of glasses can make the whole world look different.

It seems to me that as a Christ follower, I need to have the ability and sensitivity at times to see the world through the lenses of others – especially of those who are not followers of Jesus.

For people with a non Christian worldview the world looks very different. Different values and assumptions are accepted – just like wearing different glasses. The glasses represent a set of beliefs and values and a different understanding of the world.

Much has been written about post modernism and its core beliefs with its relativism, subjectivism and pragmatism. Each person has their own “truth”. The media is constantly enforcing a view that sees values as personal and relative (except for what is politically correct). Anything that can be labelled sexist or racist or intolerant is dismissed or rejected where the ultimate evil is to be seen to exclude anyone. Christianity is often wrongly portrayed as exclusive and arrogant, out of touch and not acceptable, while almost everything else is OK and even welcomed – especially other cultures and religions. All cultures are seen as equal and to be respected – except for western Christian culture.

It disturbs me greatly when I’m with other Christians who can be so unaware or insensitive to how their words and conversations “look” or sound to others. Christian language itself can be incom-

prehensible to non Christians. Biblical words and phrases are thrown around which may be meaningless to an average Aussie from a non Christian background. Even worse is when internal church issues or even conflict is discussed in front of others. Yes, at times I do cringe as I don’t want these issues to distract the person from considering a relationship with Jesus.

Sometimes I feel that I can see with a different lens and understand how this could appear to the wider society. I was sitting in a group one time, when someone asked a question that raised a number of theological issues. A number of believers jumped in to start to expound their understandings, which just brought further confusion to the face of the questioner. People seemed unaware of a different lens being used – it suggested possible exclusion to this person, something my Christian friends seemed not to recognize. In addition the subject involved differing opinions and understandings even within the wider Christian community. I made a suggestion that this was another subject, to be considered possibly at another time. However I felt concern as I read the way that it had come across to this person – who is still deciding whether to follow Christ – and wondered if it all made sense.

HYPOCRISY RADARS

People have their hypocrisy radars on. Our society is hyper-sensitive to any statement that may appear to exclude some people

or groups and is increasingly hostile to Christian views on many subjects. It’s not about any need to embrace these views, but about a sensitivity to where people are coming from. If people do not choose to accept Jesus then it is their choice, but peripheral issues or a lack of sensitivity should not cloud that choice.

To communicate effectively this needs to be understood. Common ground is a good place to start to explore a

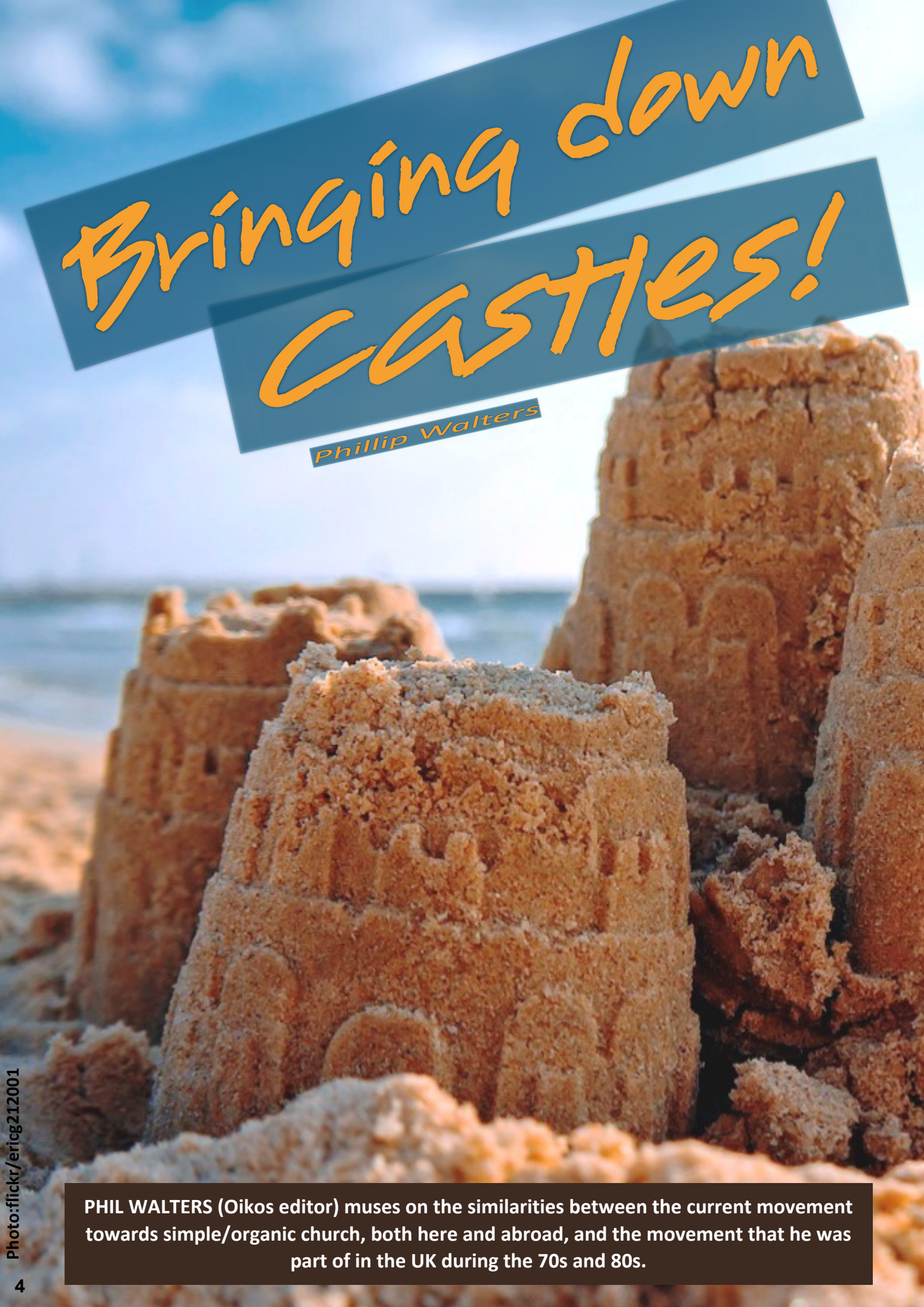
I am yearning for each person to be able to consider Jesus as part of their journey and to walk along beside them as a fellow traveller who is also on a spiritual journey

person’s journey, needs and understandings, and personal story. If this respect is given, most people are open to listen to my story which involves a spiritual dimension. I am yearning for each person to be able to consider Jesus as part of their journey and to walk along beside them as a fellow traveller who is also on a spiritual journey. I don’t have all

the answers but I have found someone who is incredibly unique, impactful and special. Truth, both conceptual and personal, is found in this relationship - not just in beliefs and concepts.

Many Christians (including myself at times) have thought that having “the truth” and the right beliefs are *the* important issue! Yet for many other people there is no absolute truth. They are, however, curious, and want to see how it works in my life, relationships and family, finances, etc.

My plea is that we will not only see the world through our glasses but through that of (Continued on page 9) **3**



Bringing down CASTLES!

Phillip Walters

PHIL WALTERS (Oikos editor) muses on the similarities between the current movement towards simple/organic church, both here and abroad, and the movement that he was part of in the UK during the 70s and 80s.

Back in '74 I found myself in London, a travel-weary backpacker at the end of a long period of searching, rediscovering Jesus and thrust into a new thing that was emerging in the UK – a house church.

House churches flourished in the 70s in the UK, born out of the Charismatic Movement and expressing a dissatisfaction with the existing expressions of Christianity and a desire to get back to “simple” church. Those in more traditional structures dismissed them or criticised them as being theologically shallow, dangerously independent or “fly by night” but they never-the-less flourished and many of the largest and most influential churches and networks in the UK today trace their beginnings back to homechurch.

Alongside this movement however was another important move of God that embraced these pioneers and gave them the foundations they needed in order to stay on track and grow. This was the move of God to restore the foundational ministries of apostles and prophets to the church. Men like Terry Virgo, Bryn Jones, Arthur Wallace and Gerald Coates emerged as fathers and mentors to these fledgling churches and brought stability, orthodoxy and vision. Under their ministry there was a restoration to the church of such concepts as true community, discipleship, the true nature of the Church, the oneness of the Body of Christ, the power of grace, and the true destiny of the Church. It was an exciting time.

Consequently the churches that embraced these ministries began to grow. Indeed many grew too big to meet in a home. However, instead of multiplying into a network of home churches, they followed the conventional wisdom of the day and moved out of their homes into a hired hall. And then out of a hired hall into a purpose built building. Then out of a smaller building into a larger one. And on the way, of course, out of jeans into suits, out of simple acoustic worship into a worship band and out of song sheets into overhead projectors, and out of OHPs into Digital Projectors etc etc..... And, in the process, out of “simple” church into “sophisticated” church – Sunday morning “event” church. I did it myself and loved it.

The problem was though, that although we loved the new songs, the bigger crowds and the you-beaut technology, our churches in fact often looked very similar to the ones that many had left in the 60s/70s except that the buildings were newer, the songs more contemporary, the technology more up to date and the preaching more entertaining. Sometimes however, if we were honest, we would find ourselves travelling home from “church” wondering whether we had actually touched the throne of God or simply been caught up in the “event”. Bit like the effects of a good concert or movie. The trouble is that it is not easy to see that when you are a musician or preacher, caught up in the program of producing the Sunday morning event (and making sure that it is a better event than the one offered up the road). Sometimes you have to leave the thing to see what it has actually become.

DEJAVU

As I ponder the past however, and examine the present, I find myself going through a kind of dejavu. It's 40 years on and it's happening again. There is an exodus taking place in the Western nations of people who feel that they have for a long time been mere spectators in a system that is geared towards producing the Sunday event, as if it were meant to be the main expression of church. Such people are looking for a simpler, more interactive and more intimate expression of church and are out there experimenting and exploring and thoroughly enjoying it. They face the same dangers and are undergoing the same scrutinies and criticisms as those of the 60s and 70s, but they are determined to chart a new course for the

church – back to the simplicity that has always marked the most outstanding times of the church's history.

And herein lays a challenge, especially for those involved in apostolic and prophetic ministry, both in Australia and elsewhere. There is a maturity in today's house church movement (or, more accurately, “simple church” movement) that cannot simply be dismissed as simplistic or idealistic. They are part of a prophetic move that is of God. They are part of what has been referred to as the move away from the “majestic ships” to the “small ships” (Isaiah 33:21).

SAND CASTLES

Which takes my musing mind down to the sea and to the sand castles we built as kids – with a moat around them and a channel for the incoming waves, designed to fill the moat. We'd watch the waves with anticipation to see which one would finally come in far enough to fill the moat and bring down the castle. Some would nearly get there but run out of steam; however one would eventually come in that would take the castle. This didn't mean that the preceding waves were not important. They represented the tide coming in and meant that the winning wave started its journey from further up the beach.

I think that there have been many movements, some fairly contemporary and many stretching over years, that have brought the church an enormous way up the beach. We would not be where we are without them. And because of them we are starting from a higher position, with all the benefit of hindsight and a fuller understanding of what God is doing. I believe that we can at least fill the moat if not be the wave that actually brings the fragile, man-made structures of the church crashing down.

However it is never enough just to bring a thing down even though there are many who seem skilled in simply doing that - and indeed the intention of this article is not to knock down but to build up. Because it's the Spirit's intention that a House be built in the earth, one that will withstand whatever wave comes against it. This House will be built of stones that are active and alive, ordinary people who are listening to the Spirit and engaged in the works of Christ. Such stones are not produced by simply “going to church” and passively sitting under a sermon week after week, no matter how lively and “anointed” such a service may seem. Even house church can become insular and inward - the focus needs to be on disciple making, not just on the gathered church. God is calling his people out of deathly religious activity, away from meetings and buildings and out into a needy world. It is to this end that he is restoring the five-fold ministries to the church, not as ends in themselves but as the agents of Christ who will release His *followers* (the real objects of Paul's Ephesians 4 teaching), release them out of dead ritual and lead them back to the simplicity that marked the Church's early beginnings and primary mission. The simplicity of Christ and Christ alone. No gimmicks, no formulas, no finely tuned programs or flash structures. Simply Jesus.

It's a challenge. In order to fulfil such a calling we will have to be willing to question much that we take for granted in church life. I believe however that it is a challenge that we must take up. Otherwise, down the track, we'll find ourselves back here again, going through dejavu once more.

Sometimes however, if we were honest, we would find ourselves travelling home from “church” wondering whether we had actually touched the throne of God or simply been caught up in the “event”



Phil Walters lives with his wife Esther in seaside Yeppoon, Central Queensland. You can catch him at www.backyardbelievers.com or contact editor@oikos.org.au

REJOICE EVERMORE CAR LOT

by Terry Somerville



When I first came to "Rejoice Evermore" Car Lot, I was a brand new model. All the other cars thought I was wonderful. They wanted me to get involved with everything at the Car Lot, even though I had hardly any miles at all. It was great! Each week we would gather together to hear manager Good-Brand speak about being cars, or he would tell us the great designers' plans for the Car Lot. He is a very wise car, and has many repair manuals and road maps in his office. I like him.

Manager Good-Brand says it is very important to attend the weekly cell-lot. The leaders of the cell-lot are like Manager Good-Brand, except they are compact models, and just have one car offices. (Manager Good-Brand is the largest model on the lot, and has big fins. He's been around a long time.) I'm not sure how the cell-lot is different than the car lot, but I like it. Until recently I went to cell-lot every Wednesday. We would be washed and have our oil checked, and then.... (this is the most exciting part) we would have our engines started! The leaders always tell us to stay in "P" and not push the pedals when the engines are running. But it feels so good to have our engines running that we all want to do it.

One time my friend "Accel" pushed the pedals. (He's Japanese. He says his name is short for "accelerator") Anyway, when he pushed his pedals he suddenly shot across the cell-lot and crashed into Volvo, who was quite upset. Volvo said "you new models are always trying to change things, and are out of control." Accel and Volvo had to see Manager Good-Brand for a long time. They went to the garage and some of their parts were changed. Accel says he doesn't feel the same anymore and won't come to cell-lot with us now.

Occasionally a model called "Prophet" comes to our car lot.... unexpectedly. Manager Good-Brand doesn't like him much. He says his headlights are aimed too high, and when the other cars listen to him the whole lot is in turmoil. I always listened to him though; he says things that were exciting. My temperature gauge goes up to "normal" when he talks, and it doesn't usually do that. Prophet always talks about how the great designer made us for the open road. He would say we have power we don't know about unless we travel the "Kings Highway". He always tells these

amazing stories about lights from above and signs that point the way. I want to see that! He also says "don't wait for your speedometer to move before you go. Just go, and your speedometer will move!"

One time Prophet talked to me personally. He read my sticker, which I couldn't see from where my headlights are. He told me how my model had something called "four wheel drive", and ran best in challenging terrain. We don't have any of that in the car lot, so I didn't know how it worked. But, I thought it must be true because whenever I hear the words "four wheel drive" my windshield washer goes off all by itself. I talked to Manager Good-Brand about letting me try the four wheel drive, but he said "we have no place for that here. Just stay on the pavement and you'll be fine."

A couple of weeks ago a car named "Missionary" came to visit us. He went on the open road and did what prophet was always telling us about. He has a partner named "Ambassador". Missionary was all banged up but very happy. He didn't care about "clear coat" paint jobs and leather seats at all. He said as long as his engine was strong and faithful he was content. He was getting a tune up in the garage, and told us that once he had his new tires he would be on the road again.

I asked Missionary lots of questions, and he explained that car lots are supposed to put cars on the road. (I always thought that the road put cars on the lot.) I told him that Manager Good-Brand had plans for a bigger lot when the "car lot revival" comes.

Missionary told me he had seen the

He also says "don't wait for your speedometer to move before you go. Just go, and your speedometer will move!"

biggest car lots in the world. He said they were only that way because they put the most cars on the road. He said I had to get out on the Kings Highway, or I would end my days sitting in the back lot. I didn't want that to happen so I decided I would try it.

Early the next morning I went out on the road. I stayed in sight of the car lot.... just in case. I slowly moved from L to 2nd to D. I felt a surge forward! Something was revving up my engine. It never did this before! I moved so fast! There was so much power. What Prophet said was true; there were signs along the way. They said "Kings Way", or "Grace Avenue". It was great! Then it happened! A light from above directed my course! Sometimes, it told me to slow down and stop. Sometimes it said go, and when I did what it said my travels were

coordinated with the other cars. Other cars!!! Yes, there were other cars out there with me. I never thought that would happen. Finally I went back to "Rejoice Evermore Car Lot". The other cars were excited, but some were concerned. They thought it was unsafe. "What if you go in the ditch?" they said. "You are only safe in the car lot." Others weren't worried about me, but thought I must need a "front end alignment". My steering wasn't the same as theirs. Over the next few weeks I took many trips onto the Kings Highway.

Finally Manager Good-Brand called me to his office for a talk. He told me I needed to choose between the car lot and the highway. I asked him "Why can't I do both?" He said that cars in his lot must be loyal, and I was not doing what he said by going on the road. He also warned me that when I was on the Kings Highway he could not direct my path. I

said the lights directed my path, but he said it was not the same. So I chose to go onto the Kings Highway to stay. I just wanted to say good bye, and I hope that you will come on the Kings Highway too. It's what you are made for.

Your friend, Wheeler



Terry Somerville runs a radio station (Spirit FM) in Canada and is the Director of Total Change Christian Ministries, an apostolic ministry into a number of third world countries with a local emphasis upon ministry, with signs and wonders, in the marketplace. www.spirit-fm.ca www.totalchange.org

(DIRECTIONS Cont. from page 2) with many other tasks. She does this better than I do!

Another busy friend of mine makes time to have coffees with people on a weekly basis to build relationships.

Gary Chapman's book, "*The 5 of Love Languages*", reminds us that people experience love in different ways or "languages" such as: words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service and giving and

receiving gifts. I am not particularly good at some of these love languages, such as choosing and giving gifts. However I've been learning from others, who are always giving small gifts such as cards, books, flowers, plants, etc as a way of showing love. I still have much to learn to become a "better lover" of people. Jesus said that his followers or disciples would be identified by the love that they have for others (John 13:35). To become an expert at loving people is becoming a key life goal for me, which is a personal challenge as I am naturally more task orientated.

Loving people means that I desire their highest good in all areas of life. This includes their spiritual well being. From my experience, the very best I can offer a person is to introduce them to Jesus. He is doing so much in my life, not only for my

eternal future but for every area of life, such as helping me to become a better dad and husband – I guess I'm a bit of a slow learner at times. But following God's ways and listening to him has brought enormous blessing to our family and children. One aspect of this is that every week we bless each of our children individually, recognizing their good qualities, and the good things they do, and speaking well of them and listening to God about their future destiny. Many people, even unbelievers, have shared in these times and been significantly impacted. When there is an opportunity I like to introduce people to the Father, to Jesus and his Spirit. As a family we find it so exciting when we see young people and others accepting Christ, which has happened several times over the past few days and months.

The Two Key Priorities

For me loving God and loving people – which includes making disciples – are the two key priorities in my life as a Christ follower. I find that this is both helpful and clarifying, but also very challenging and only possible through the grace and empowerment of Jesus. I hope that this is not sounding all too neat and perfect because I find that it's a journey in the "messiness of life" and I often lose focus or fail. That's another thing I love about Jesus, is that he keeps gently reminding me

and calling me back when I mess up or become distracted. In fact all of these "distractions" are part of life, rather than being separate from it.

True spirituality involves integrating love for God and for others as threads, all though the tapestry of life. When life and spirituality become disconnected and separate it quickly degenerates into "religion" - which I (and many people) find less and less appealing. In fact it can become quite distasteful. Contrastingly I'm finding Jesus and his life and teachings and love increasingly appealing. I'm getting to know a different Jesus to the one I was told about growing up in a Christian setting. He is both "delightful and disturbing", as one writer put it. He attracts me and also disturbs my complacency, selfishness and indifference to others. He calls me to be a better man and to face myself, as well as a crazy, and often unjust and frenetic world. For me it's important to have a compass setting to constantly check my life bearings against.



PHIL BROWN lives with his wife Kate and their four children, in the Victorian township of Eagle Point, where they run Eagle Point Cottages, a holiday accommodation business. Their other true passion however is Disciple Making and Simple Church, which they have been involved in for a long time. Phil is the Director of OikosAustralia.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Want more help or information on making disciples or doing simple church? How about a seminar in your area? Or a contact with someone from one of our Regional Teams? Or maybe you'd like to support the vision of Oikos Australia. Ring us on 0409 137 988 or email us at philbrown@oikos.org.au

Snapshots of Community

IT'S HAPPENING IN AUSTRALIA TOO!

Ian Jenkins www.spiritednetwork.com

This is a report from some of the South Brisbane groups associated with Stuart Gramenz (hence the references to some of the overseas work of Spirit Led Network).

We have heard of the great things that are happening in Zambia but hear little of the events in Australia. Here is a brief report of some of members of the home churches in Southside Brisbane.

Nancy

Nancy has been a Christian for many years and knows our material back to front. On her shopping days she searches for "the man of peace" in the malls. Many times this has occurred in the coffee shop. Quite often prayer for a need or a healing provides an entrée for the gospel.

Nancy would see around 12 decisions a year. In the last month she has seen 2 salvations, one which was immediate and the other over a period of 8 months of coffee meetings.

Heather

Heather joined the group about 18 months ago. She came from a traditional church and was never taught that she had a personal ministry. After studying our material and listening to the testimonies (especially Nancy's) a transformation from fear to boldness began.

She started looking for opportunities to share her faith in the malls. In a breakthrough moment, she prayed openly in the mall for a person in need. The two people who were shopping with her were in disbelief as it was contrary to her reserved nature. When she shared with the group about this burst of courage she claimed that she was simply "doing a Nancy".

Heather lives next door to an 87 year old man. He has been continually complaining about all the pain in his body. After each complaint she offered prayer but it was refused. A few days ago the complaint came again, however this time his body was blue and he was in pain from head to foot. "Doctors can't help me, there's nothing I can do to relieve the pain." he moaned. This time the offer of prayer was accepted. After prayer he said in total disbelief, "I'll go and have three beers that will fix it." The next day she noticed he was mowing the lawn with no apparent pain. After inquiring he confirmed the healing and told her that the "massage" had worked and that she could pray for him anytime.

Heather has now led two teenage girls to the Lord and a young boy.

Jesse

Jesse is a teenager who loves basketball. During a game, Jarrod, one of his team members complained that his tendonitis in his knee had flared up and he was in pain. Jess asked if he would like prayer and the young man accepted. Within a few minutes, the boy told Jess that the pain had gone.

Luke

As a teenager Luke had accompanied us on a mission trip to the Philippines where he mainly observed. Last Dec that all changed when he attended a Youth for Christ outreach camp as a leader. He prayed for the sick and cast a demon out of a teenage boy.

Since then he has become extremely bold in witnessing and praying for the sick.

He followed up Harley, one of the boys saved at the camp. Now both he and Harley's brother attend the group meeting.

Recently a group including Luke prayed for Brock, a young man who was "double jointed". There were apparently parts of bones missing from his elbow and shoulder which allowed him, as a party trick, to move his arm into grotesque positions. However, it also caused severe pain and he requested prayer. As they prayed the elbow "moved" and a bone was restored at the tip of his elbow. This re-creative miracle was captured on video. The boy was then unable to do his "tricks" and the pain was gone. At that meeting Luke also cast another demon out of a boy.

Luke is also listening to the Lord and on two occasions was led to minister to people not in our group. He went to their homes and told them that God had sent him. Both the person who had a broken leg and the one who had surgery testified of immediate relief from pain.

John

John is a gifted evangelist who has led hundreds to the Lord one on one. He brought Richard, an unsaved friend, to the group. However it was another member, Paul, who led him in a salvation prayer. Richard is being discipled by Luke and they hang out together regularly.

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Ian & Genevieve

Their group has been growing to the point of overflowing (37 members). In the coming weeks they will be multiplying. Ian has been reaching out to other parts of the Body and has recently been conducting a "How to Hear from God" Seminar in St. George. He is also doing the same seminar at River City church in Brisbane as an introduction to our Supernatural Armed and Dangerous Course.

Phil

Phil's group is the most pro-active in seeing the unsaved being led to Christ. Phil has recently returned from a month in Zambia where he equipped leaders and Master Equippers with our course material. He is presently in the USA doing the same work.

Women's Groups

The number of groups on the Southside has been slowly growing and now totals five. This has been largely due to the

women's groups which continue to grow. Mary's group has grown from six to twelve. They are continually outreaching with Di recently leading another lady to the Lord. The group prayed for Jenny who had terminal cancer and she is now in remission.

This is just a portion of the happenings in the Southside groups and we know there is a lot more ministry going on in other home churches.

BETTY'S MIRACLE

The following story came through from Roger Coggins, from Glenbrook, NSW, who wrote, "I thought you would be thrilled to read the attached story from one of our home church members, Betty. She is now 83 and one of our core founding members."

Last week my good friend Roger who comes with his wife Margaret to the church we hold in my home, and works for Wesley Mission, visited a gentleman in the course of his work. He found two Pastors who worked together on the lower Blue Mountains and heavily involved in a prayer and healing ministry. They hold a service every Thursday morning at the rear of our regional Christian bookshop, and Roger suggested it may be an idea for me to go to one of their services.

So I went yesterday (31 Oct 2013) wearing my neck collar and using my walker. We sang a number of hymns and then one of the men preached for about 15-20 minutes. There were about 15 people and each one shared how God had helped them.

Then the attention turned to me. I told them that I had been crippled from birth; they asked me for details so I told them I had my left leg and foot considerably shorter than my right leg; I had degenerative spinal disease and was considered by the medical authorities as a chronic pain patient. I had very limited movement in my neck; I could only raise my left arm 45 degrees, my left side was too weak to allow me to do much and my left hand was incapable of holding even a cup of coffee.

I told them that many people asked how I managed. I have always said that it is to prove to people that I revere God even though I could have given up years ago. The minister said that I have been wrong in doing this and that I could, and should have asked God to heal me. He reminded me how Jesus had cured the deaf and blind, raised Lazarus from the dead and healed all who came to him, and that he could do this for me.

With my permission, the people then began to lay their hands on me and pray. They asked God to lengthen my left leg, and as I watched, it did just that! They prayed in Jesus name, thanking Him each time for my leg and foot and ankle to be whole. As I looked I could see my leg moving down and my foot and ankle adjusting until both my feet were flat on the floor and, in alignment.

They then asked me to raise my left arm – I could only get it up about 45 degrees – and they laid hands and prayed over my arm. I found that I could raise it right up as high as it should be able to go. They thanked Jesus every time and asked for strength in my hand. I have never been able to hold a glass of water in my left hand, yet they gave me a large bottle, about 18 inches high and full of water, and I lifted it high over my head! They also ran their hands down my spine, praying for the degeneration to go, then my hips, which they said were also not sitting properly.

Lastly they prayed for my pain and asked me to move my neck. I have only ever had limited movement and could now move it freely. All this time they were either praying and speaking in tongues, and thanking Jesus. I was thanking Jesus too, and although I was in tears all the time, I thanked Him for each healing as it took place.

We then went into the Christian bookshop for coffee. As we were leaving they asked me to push my walker with my left hand, in and out of the displays in the shop, and I did so all the way back to my car.

I just had to tell everyone about this miracle after 83 years, and praise God for it. Love you all. I hope you find this interesting and inspiring. Please join with me in praising Jesus for His undying love for all who believe.

Betty

(DIFFERENT GLASSES cont. from page 3) the outside world and its frame work, and be sensitive and perceptive. Yes, challenge the dominant world view and its inconsistencies, but to communicate we need to see how *what* we say, and how we may communicate it, is very important.

Increasingly I need to tell stories and learn to listen. After all Jesus was the master story teller, who confronted evil and hypocrisy in his world, especially in religious circles, but had a deep understanding and compassion for people, especially for

the marginalized, hurting and undervalued people such as lepers, children, women, prostitutes, fishermen, and shepherds and everyday people. These all heard him gladly, but the religious establishment rejected him. Perhaps this divide tells us something important that may be relevant to today. Perhaps he had the ability to wear different glasses, while not just blindly accepting that world and its understandings, and so effectively communicated and related to many people – not just to his followers. ■ Phil Brown

15 Theses

How

1. Church is a Way of Life, not a series of religious meetings
2. Time to change the system
3. The Third Reformation.
4. From Church-Houses to house-churches
5. The church has to become small in order to grow big
6. No church is led by a Pastor alone
7. The right pieces - fitted together in the wrong way
8. God does not leave the Church in the hands of bureaucratic clergy
9. Return from organized to organic forms of Christianity
10. From worshipping our worship to worshipping God
12. Rediscovering the "Lord's Supper" to be a real supper with real food
13. From denominations to city-wide celebrations
14. Developing a persecution-proof spirit
15. The Church comes home



15 Theses That Change the World

Wolfgang Simson wrote his 15 THESES in the 90's as part of his 'must-read' book, 'Houses That Change the World'. They are as prophetic a call now as they were then and worth re-publishing.

God is changing the Church, and that, in turn, will change the world.

Millions of Christians around the world are aware of an imminent reformation of global proportions. They say, in effect: "Church as we know it is preventing Church as God wants it." A growing number of them are surprisingly hearing God say the very same things. There is a collective new awareness of age-old revelations, a corporate spiritual echo. In the following "15 Theses" I will summarize a part of this, and I am convinced that it reflects a part of what the Spirit of God is saying to the Church today. For some, it might be the proverbial fist-sized cloud on Elijah's sky. Others already feel the pouring rain.

1. Church is a Way of Life, not a series of religious meetings

Before they were called Christians followers of Christ have been called "The Way". One of the reasons was that they have literally found "the way to live." The nature of Church is not reflected in a constant series of religious meetings led by professional clergy in holy rooms specially reserved to experience Jesus, but in the prophetic way followers of Christ live their everyday life in spiritually extended families as a vivid answer to the questions society faces, at the place where it counts most: in their homes.

2. Time to change the system

In aligning itself to the religious patterns of the day, the historic Orthodox Church after Constantine in the 4th century AD adopted a religious system which was in essence Old Testament, complete with priests, altar, frankincense and a Jewish, synagogue-style worship pattern. The Roman Catholic Church went on to canonize

the system. Luther did reform the content of the gospel, but left the outer forms of "church" remarkably untouched; the Free-Churches freed the system from the State, the Baptists then baptized it, the Quakers dry-cleaned it, the Salvation Army put it into a uniform, the Pentecostals anointed it and the Charismatics renewed it, but until today nobody has really changed the superstructure. It is about time to do just that.

3. The Third Reformation.

In rediscovering the gospel of salvation by faith and grace alone, Luther started to reform the Church through a reformation of theology. In the 18th century through movements like the Moravians there was a recovery of a new intimacy with God, which led to a reformation of spirituality, the Second Reformation. Now God is touching the wineskins themselves, initiating a Third Reformation, a reformation of structure.

4. From Church-Houses to house-churches

Since New Testament times, there is no such thing as "a house of God". At the cost of his life, Stephen reminded unequivocally: God does not live in temples made by human hands. The Church is the people of God. The Church, therefore, was and is at home where people are at home: in ordinary houses. There, the people of God:

Share their lives in the power of the Holy Spirit,

Have "meatings," that is, they eat when they meet,

They often do not even hesitate to sell private property and share material and spiritual blessings,

Teach each other in real-life situations how to obey God's word, dialogue-style and not professor-style,

Pray and prophesy with each other, baptize, 'lose their face' and their ego by confessing their sins,

Regaining a new corporate identity by experiencing love, acceptance and forgiveness.

5. The church has to become small in order to grow big

Most churches of today are simply too big to provide real fellowship. They have too often become "fellowships without fellowship." The New Testament Church was a mass of small groups, typically between 10 and 15 people. It grew not upward into big congregations between 20 and 300 people filling a cathedral and making real, mutual communication improbable. Instead, it multiplied "sideward", like organic cells, once these groups reached around 15-20 people. Then, if possible, it drew all the Christians together into citywide celebrations, as with Solomon's Temple court in Jerusalem. The traditional congregational church as we know it is, statistically speaking, neither big nor beautiful, but rather a sad compromise, an overgrown house-church and an under-grown celebration, often missing the dynamics of both.

6. No church is led by a Pastor alone

The local church is not led by a Pastor, but fathered by an Elder, a local person

The Church is the people of God.
The Church, therefore, was and is at home where people are at home: in ordinary houses.

God seems to be in the business of delivering His Church from a Babylonian captivity of religious bureaucrats and controlling spirits into the public domain, the hands of ordinary people made extraordinary by God, who, like in the old days, may still smell of fish, perfume and revolution.

of wisdom and reality. The local house-churches are then networked into a movement by the combination of elders and members of the so-called five-fold ministries (Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Evangelists and Teachers) circulating "from house to house," whereby there is a special foundational role to play for the apostolic and prophetic ministries (Eph. 2:20, and 4:11.12). A Pastor (shepherd) is a very necessary part of the whole team, but he cannot fulfil more than a part of the whole task of "equipping the saints for the ministry," and has to be complemented synergistically by the other four ministries in order to function properly.

7. The right pieces - fitted together in the wrong way

In doing a puzzle, we need to have the right original for the pieces, otherwise the final product, the whole picture, turns out wrong, and the individual pieces do not make much sense. This has happened to large parts of the Christian world: we have all the right pieces, but have fitted them together wrong, because of fear, tradition, religious jealousy and a power-and-control mentality. As water is found in three forms, ice, water and steam, the five ministries mentioned in Eph. 4:11-12, the Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists are also found today, but not always in the right forms and in the right places: they are often frozen to ice in the rigid system of institutionalized Christianity; they sometimes exist as clear water; or they have vanished like steam into the thin air of free-flying ministries and "independent" churches, accountable to no-one. As it is best to water flowers with the fluid version of water, these five equipping ministries will have to be transformed back into new, and at the same time age-old, forms, so that the whole spiritual organism can flourish and the individual "ministers" can find their proper role and place in the whole. That is one more reason why we need to return back to the Maker's original and blueprint for the Church.

8. God does not leave the Church in the hands of bureaucratic clergy

No expression of a New Testament church is ever led by just one professional "holy man" doing the business of communicating with God and then feeding some relatively passive religious consumers Moses-style. Christianity has adopted this method from pagan religions, or at best from the Old Testament. The heavy professionalisation of the church since Constantine has now been a pervasive influence long enough, dividing the people of God artificially into laity and clergy. According to the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:5), "there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." God simply does not bless religious professionals to force themselves in-between people and God forever. The veil is torn, and God is allowing people to access Himself directly through Jesus Christ, the only Way. To enable the priesthood of all believers, the present system will have to change completely. Bureaucracy is the most dubious of all administrative systems, because it basically asks only two questions: yes or no. There is no room for spontaneity and humanity, no room for real life. This may be OK for politics and companies, but not the Church. God seems to be in the business of delivering His Church from a Babylonian captivity of religious bureaucrats and controlling spirits into the public domain, the hands of ordinary people made extraordinary by God, who, like in the old days, may still smell of fish, perfume and revolution.

9. Return from organized to organic forms of Christianity

The "Body of Christ" is a vivid description of an organic, not an organized, being. Church consists on its local level of a

multitude of spiritual families, which are organically related to each other as a network, where the way the pieces are functioning together is an integral part of the message of the whole. What has become a maximum of organization with a minimum of organism has to be changed into a minimum of organization to allow a maximum of organism. Too much organization has, like a straightjacket, often choked the organism for fear that something might go wrong. Fear is the opposite of faith, and not exactly a Christian virtue. Fear wants to control, faith can trust. Control, therefore, may be good, but trust is better. The Body of Christ is entrusted by God into the hands of steward-minded people with a supernatural charismatic gift to believe God that He is still in control, even if they are not. A development of trust-related regional and national networks, not a new arrangement of political ecumenism is necessary for organic forms of Christianity to re-emerge.

10. From worshipping our worship to worshipping God

The image of much of contemporary Christianity can be summarized, a bit euphemistically, as holy people coming regularly to a holy place at a holy day at a holy hour to participate in a holy ritual lead by a holy man dressed in holy clothes against a holy fee. Since this regular performance-oriented enterprise called "worship service" requires a lot of organizational talent and administrative bureaucracy to keep going, formalized and institutionalized patterns developed quickly into rigid traditions. Statistically, a traditional 1-2 hour "worship service" is very resource-hungry but actually produces very little fruit in terms of discipling people, that is, in changed lives.

Church consists on its local level of a multitude of spiritual families, which are organically related to each other as a network, where the way the pieces are functioning together is an integral part of the message of the whole.

Much of Christianity has fled the family, often as a place of its own spiritual defeat, and then has organized artificial performances in sacred buildings far from the atmosphere of real life.

Economically speaking, it might be a "high input and low output" structure. Traditionally, the desire to "worship in the right way" has led to much denominationalism, confessionalism and nominalism. This not only ignores that Christians are called to "worship in truth and in spirit," not in cathedrals holding songbooks, but also ignores that most of life is informal, and so is Christianity as "the Way of Life." Do we need to change from being powerful actors to start "acting powerfully?"

11. Stop bringing people to church and start bringing the church to the people

The church is changing back from being a Come-structure to being again a Go-structure. As one result, the Church needs to stop trying to bring people "into the church," and start bringing the Church to the people. The mission of the Church will never be accomplished just by adding to the existing structure; it will take nothing less than a mushrooming of the church through spontaneous multiplication of itself into areas of the population of the world, where Christ is not yet known.

12. Rediscovering the "Lord's Supper" to be a real supper with real food

Church tradition has managed to "celebrate the Lord's Supper" in a homeopathic and deeply religious form, characteristically with a few drops of wine, a tasteless cookie and a sad face. However, the "Lord's Supper" was actually more a substantial supper with a symbolic meaning, than a symbolic supper with a substantial meaning. God is restoring eating back into our meeting.

13. From Denominations to city-wide celebrations

Jesus called a universal movement and what came was a series of religious companies with global chains marketing their special brands of Christianity and competing with each other. Through this branding of Christianity most of Protestantism has, therefore, become politically insignificant and often more concerned with traditional specialties and religious infighting than with developing a collective testimony before the world. Jesus simply never asked people to organize themselves into denominations. In the early days of the Church, Christians had a dual identity: they were truly His church and vertically converted to God, and then organized themselves according to geography, that is, converting also horizontally to each

other on earth. This means not only Christian neighbors organizing themselves into neighborhood- or house-churches, where they share their lives locally, but Christians coming together as a collective identity as much as they can for citywide or regional celebrations expressing the corporateness of the Church of the city or region. Authenticity in the neighborhoods connected with a regional or citywide corporate identity will make the Church not only politically significant and spiritually convincing, but will allow a return to the biblical model of the City-Church.

14. Developing a persecution-proof spirit

They crucified Jesus, the Boss of all the Christians. Today, his followers are often more into titles, medals and social respectability, or, worst of all, they remain silent and are not worth being noticed at all. "Blessed are you when you are persecuted", says Jesus. Biblical Christianity is a healthy threat to pagan godlessness and sinfulness, a world overcome by greed, materialism, jealousy and any amount of demonic standards of ethics, sex, money and power. Contemporary Christianity in many countries is simply too harmless and polite to be worth persecuting. But as Christians again live out New Testament standards of life and, for example, call sin as sin, conversion or persecution has been, is and will be the natural reaction of the world. Instead of nesting comfortably in temporary zones of religious liberty, Christians will have to prepare to be again discovered as the main culprits against global humanism, the modern slavery of having to have fun and the outright worship of Self, the wrong centre of the universe. That is why Christians will and must feel the "repressive tolerance" of a world which has lost any absolutes and therefore refuses to recognize and obey its creator God with his absolute standards. Coupled with the growing ideologization, privatization and spiritualisation of politics and economics, Christians will, sooner than most think, have their chance to stand happily accused in the company of Jesus. They need to prepare now for the future by developing a persecution-proof

spirit and an even more persecution-proof structure.

15. The Church comes home

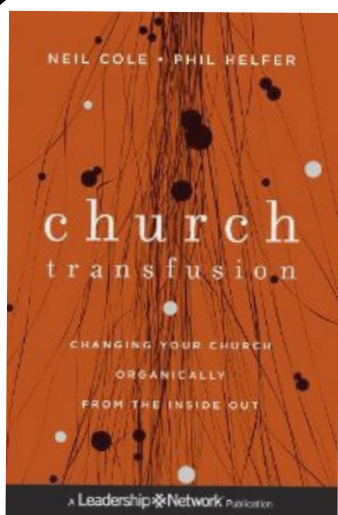
Where is the easiest place, say, for a man to be spiritual? Maybe again, is it hiding behind a big pulpit, dressed up in holy robes, preaching holy words to a faceless crowd and then disappearing into an office? And what is the most difficult, and therefore most meaningful, place for a man to be spiritual? At home, in the presence of his wife and children, where everything he does and says is automatically put through a spiritual litmus test against reality, where hypocrisy can be effectively weeded out and authenticity can grow. Much of Christianity has fled the family, often as a place of its own spiritual defeat, and then has organized artificial performances in sacred buildings far from the atmosphere of real life. As God is in the business of recapturing the homes, the church turns back to its roots, back to where it came from. It literally comes home, completing the circle of Church history at the end of world history.

As Christians of all walks of life, from all denominations and backgrounds, feel a clear echo in their spirit to what God's Spirit is saying to the Church, and start to hear globally in order to act locally, they begin to function again as one body. They organize themselves into neighborhood house-churches and meet in regional or city-celebrations. You are invited to become part of this movement and make your own contribution. Maybe your home, too, will become a house that changes the world.



WOLFGANG SIMSON is no stranger to the Organic/Simplechurch scene. He is the author of twelve books that have been

translated into twenty languages. These include his classic works, *Houses That Change the World* and *The Starfish Manifesto* (available as a free ebook). Wolfgang is married to Mercy, and they have three children. After living in the United Kingdom and India, they now live in the south of Germany.



Following Neil Cole's recent visit to Australia in November we thought we'd publish Roger Thoman's review of his latest book:

Church Transfusion: Changing your Church Organically From the Inside Out www.cole-slaw.blogspot.com.au

Let me first say that, as with all of Neil's books, it is filled with many quotable insights (see below) that make the book worth reading. Even as he looks at the prospect of changing traditional church systems into organic, missional forces, he

maintains a sharp and clear focus on the themes he laid out in Organic Church and Organic Leadership.

That said, tackling the question of whether churches can shed their institutional frameworks in order to function organically is a bit (to me) like asking if water can be turned into wine. We know it can happen, after all Jesus did it. In the same way, we know churches can be 'transfused' with new life, but... oh how challenging.

To Neil's credit, he does not water down this challenge as he states that churches wanting a truly organic transfusion will have to:

See it • Want it • Pray for it • Pay for it • Do it

The last two will require (in this writer's opinion) a commitment that probably few will make, but for those who do this book will be an invaluable guide.

Some Neil Cole-isms from Church Transfusion:

"It is time to abandon the domestic faith of suburban consumer Churchianity to live a life of risk for the love of a Savior who left heaven to live among the poor and marginalized people of a backward and oppressed nation."

"He did not hang out in safe places. I imagine that today you would be more likely to find

Jesus in a gay bar than at a church service."

"Why would you want to give up the daily miracle of God's actual presence and leading, a presence that parts oceans and causes water to flow from rocks or breaks the political oppression of Pharaoh? Why would we want to be like everyone else on the planet when we could live a supernatural life of love every day?"

"When a church starts to accumulate things and hold on to them as prizes worth defending or preserving, they will quickly find that their affection and provision is not found in Christ but in the maintenance and management of possessions and property."

"Resurrection power is available only to the person or church that is willing to die."

"Churches were never meant to become providers of spiritual goods and services to consumers, even if there are many who appear more than eager to buy."

"Have the people of God been divided between those who provide services and those who pay to have them provided? Absolutely! May God have mercy on us all!"

Roger Thoman

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7 tips on how to find organic church life

Nathan Odell

Finding an organic church or becoming part of an organic church life is not easy. They are few and far between and finding or experiencing one is often like trying to find an oasis in a hot desert. The time between desiring to be part of an organic community of believers and finding one is often referred to as being in the wilderness. It can be rather frustrating, and who knows how long it could last. I've been there twice now, and have learnt some things along the way, which may be able to help you come out of the wilderness. These tips are practical and actionable, so hopefully they can help a few people who are out there.

1. **Pray, pray, and pray some more.** I put this point here first for a reason... It's probably the most important. When you are alone and don't know what to do, there's only one thing you really can do – pray. It seems like a cliché, but if you ask out of a sincere heart and desire, the Lord answers. Ask the Lord to bring people into your life who you can fellowship with. Pray for saint's that the Lord can build you together with. The Lord is faithful and has answered my prayers in this regard many times (In His timing of course).
2. **Join Facebook Groups dedicated to Organic Church Networking.** This is by far one of the best tips I can give you. In Facebook you can search for things like "Organic Church Network South Africa". You will find that there are many of these types of groups you can join where like minded individuals are also seeking others to fellowship with. Share in the group where you are from and what you desire, and you will probably find some people will reply. Personally, I found the group I now meet with using this approach. Also, if you can't find a Facebook group dedicated to your country or city, then join another country's one or start a Facebook group dedicated to your country. People from all over the world join different groups so you might get lucky. Also, it is great to network and share with people, even if they are from other countries. (On a side note, for my fellow South Africans, there is a website that helps connect people in South Africa to organic church groups. Simply send your details through the website, and you will be sent the details of a group closest to you. Click on this link. For other countries, you can use this website)
3. **Follow up on potential leads.** If you hear that there is a group meeting near or even far from you, make the effort to go and visit them. The more groups you visit, the more you can find out about what's happening in your area. Every group I've visited has always opened up more contacts and



Photo: flickr/jseliger2

leads for me to explore. So even if you don't end up joining a group, you will have generated more leads.

4. **Start a blog and talk about your journey** and desire for organic church community. This is not a "must do", but it has served me well. I've had people message me asking about where they can fellowship, purely from reading about organic expressions of Church on my blog. It's been a great joy for me to connect with people and connect them to organic churches.
5. **Start small and trust the Lord.** If you happen to have one or two people around you who are pursuing the Lord in this way, then start meeting with one another regularly. It could be your spouse, family, or friend. Share with one another in a open way that exalts Christ. Get to know one another on a deeper level. A seed starts off small, but grows into a large tree. Sink your roots deeply into Christ, allow Him to nourish you, and you will grow. If there are a few of you, and you have no idea what to do, then it can be useful to get outside help, to help establish the group initially (Although, this is not always necessary).
6. **Move to a new location.** This is probably the most drastic of all the tips I've listed. Personally, I know a married couple who did this after being in the wilderness for about 7 years with nobody but themselves to fellowship with. In reality we are often willing to move for a new job, so why not move to be part of an expression of Christ's body?
7. **Lower your expectations.** No group you find or start will be perfect or meet your dreams. Organic church life is not easy, and requires lot's of patience and even suffering. Getting to know people on a deep level and sharing your life with them is challenging. Families have fights and disagreements, but they stick together through thick and thin, through poverty and wealth, and through joy and mourning. The Church is one family. We are all brothers and sisters. Let us love one another.

Nathan Odell (South Africa)

www.joinedtohim.com



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What should be the purpose of our church meetings?

Alan Knox - *The Assembling of the Church* - www.alanknox.net - writes "According to 1 Corinthians 14, the church comes together to edify one another – that is, to build themselves up toward maturity in Christ. According to Hebrews 10:24-25, the church should consider how to provoke one another toward love and good works. This should especially happen when they meet together to encourage one another. According to Ephesians 4:11-16, the church is built up when every believer works together with every other believer, with Jesus Christ alone taking the head position.

These passages seem fairly simple and straightforward to me. It has also become clear (at least to me) that the modern pattern of church meetings does not match what we see in these passages from Scripture.

If only one person teaches (preaches), even if that person has been trained and educated, and even if that person is the most talented and gifted and mature, and even if that person has been recognized (ordained) as a pastor/elder/bishop, and even if that teaching (preaching) is biblical and powerful and Spirit-led, that church will not be as healthy and will not grow in maturity as much as it would be if many people exercised their spiritual gifts during the church meeting.

Look at the summary passages above once more. Notice how often the writers of Scripture talk about "one another" during the meeting of the church – or even when the church is not meeting. In the modern church meeting, the "one anothers" are set aside – for many different reasons, I believe. And, I believe that none of those reasons are valid.

The best thing that could happen in the church is for pastors, preachers, teachers, elders, leaders, to sit down and listen to other people and be served by other people. We must move away from one-way service (the leader serving through his or her gifts) and move toward one-another service (every believer serving through each of their gifts).

The church is not built up (edified) when the people only hear God speak through me – even if I have something very valuable to say. The church is built up when we hear God speak through one another."

Should Simple Churches produce a Statement of Faith?

Maurice Smith – www.safehousesofhopeandprayer.org - The Parousia Network - writes "I recently received several e-mails asking about our "doctrinal statement" in The Parousia Network. This made me stop and think some more about doctrine and house church. Dr. Haddon Robinson once told me that doctrinal statements tend to be "conflict documents," that is, they tend to get written as the result of a conflict and a need to distinguish what one group believes as opposed to the other group. I call them "shibboleth" documents (see Judges 12:1-6), "We all say 'shibboleth' but they all say 'sibboleth'". People in search of doctrinal statements are often in search of a "shibboleth" (or a "sibboleth"). If you want to know what I believe theologically, get a copy of Wayne Grudem's "Systematic Theology" and read it. When you're done, if you have any left-over questions, let me know and we'll talk about them.

Theology ("doctrine" or "dogma") is like the foundation of a house. A good foundation doesn't guarantee that what you build on it will be good or will last; but a bad foundation almost guarantees future problems with whatever you build upon it. Good theology doesn't guarantee a successful house church any more than a good foundation guarantees a successful house. But bad theology jeopardizes everything you and your house church seek to build on that foundation. The success of your (or any) house church will be determined by what you & I build on the good foundation we lay.

And most of what is built will be "non-theological" in any technical sense. Do you love one another, even when you sharply disagree with one another? Do you bear one another's burdens non-judgmentally? Do you pray with and for one another? Do you equip and build one another up through mutual ministry and the proper exercise of all the gifts God has bestowed upon you? Do you meet one another's needs radically and financially? Do you feed the hungry, befriend the stranger, visit the prisoner, prefer one another in honor and practice the more than 30 "one another's" in Scripture? These are the building blocks of organic house church which we build upon the proper foundation of right doctrine. Without them we are little more than a bible study club, or a prophecy club, or a tongues club, or a healing club, etc. But with them, we are the living stones which God Himself is using to build a spiritual house that the New Testament calls "the ekklesia of God".

If you have a question regarding Simple Church we'd love to have it. Drop us a line at editor@oikos.org.au

Surfing Simple Church Sites worth checking out on the Web

It has been said that the current worldwide interest in Simple / Organic Church owes a great deal to the invention of the internet. Here's some more sites worth checking out. And if you come across more let us know.

www.vergenetwork.org For anyone "pursuing the mission of God, in community, whatever the context, for the sake of the Gospel", there is a great site called the Verge Network. Featuring a ton of very up-to-date, wide-ranging and relevant resources and contributors,

they describe themselves as advocates and champions for movements of gospel-centred Missional Communities, and boast (in a humble way) of having a "passionate and engaged audience of leaders who want to see the Gospel change them, change their communities, change the neighbours and change the world". Wow. If that describes you then check them out.

www.yourkingdomcomeyes.com is Craig Kirby's site. Craig is a writer and apostolic church-planter who operates out of Melbourne. His site is a treasure chest of articles exploring the nature of the Kingdom of God and of the church and her mission.

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